12:Dundas G-5 (ca. 1900) 1908 FL6 Dorobo FL6
Kikuyu FL10

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Notes on the Origin and History of the Kikuyu and Dorobo Tribes. *By Hon. K. R. Dundas.* 76

The earliest inhabitants of the country now occupied by the Kikuyu of whom any reliable information is obtainable were a people who call themselves the Okiek. To the Kikuyu they were known as the Asi,* to the Masai as Il Torobo,† and to the coast people as Wa-Ndorobo, by which name they were also familiarly known to Europeans, though of late the more correct form of Dorobo has taken its place. Curiously enough some writers have recently invented and use a corruption of the Swahili form and style these people Andorobo.

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Who the Kikuyu were, and when they first came into the country which they now occupy, are questions not easily answered. The invasion commenced probably about 80 or 100 years ago and has not entirely ceased even now. Undoubtedly many different tribes impelled to migrate by famines, raids, and the pressure from within and without of increasing population, helped in forming the present Kikuyu race. That they represent a fusion of many different tribes is shown by the numerous types to be

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* Sing., *Masai.* † Sing., *Ol Torobani.*

sion amongst them, and it is not difficult with a little practice to tell the particular division to which a Kikuyu belongs. Thus the people of Iriaini* have pronounced Masai features, and many of their chiefs are pure or half Masai by birth. This is due to the fact that when the Kikuyu invaded that district about forty years ago they found it occupied by the remnants of the Alkipiak and Dale-le-butok Masai, who owing to famines, raids, and other causes were too much weakened to resist them. The two tribes therefore settled down peaceably side by side, and by intermarrying formed one people.

Again, many of the Kikuyu clans claim descent from certain particular tribes: thus, the Anjiro and Chakimeyo clans say they are descended from the Sheka, the Akkachiko and Achera from the Kamba, the Aeneka from the Chaga of Kilimanjaro. Anyone enquiring into the descent of those present at a meeting of Kikuyu elders will find an extraordinary number of different tribes represented. One is a Meoro, another a Chaga, a third a Masai, a fourth a Sheka, a fifth a Dorobo, and so on.

The actual Kikuyu themselves are said to have come from two tribes called the Shagisha and Ngumbe, both of which still exist as tribes somewhere beyond the Meoro country, north of Mount Kenia.

I cannot speak from experience of the Shagisha, but I have met a native of Ngumbe whose appearance reminded me strongly of a Kikuyu. This man, who said he had never seen a white man before, told me that his country lay beyond Meoro and that he had come here to visit relatives. These same Ngumbe are believed to have been originally Dorobo, and Karuri, one of the paramount chiefs of the Kikuyu, who is himself a Dorobo, claims descent from them. The Ngumbe of the present day are probably analogous to the Kikuyu, *i.e.*, they are a mixture of Dorobo and some other tribe or tribes.

Many absolutely foreign tribes have had colonies in Kikuyu for shorter or longer periods. A tribe of coast people called Digo are stated to have lived for many years on the Tana River, in what is now known as the Fort Hall District.† Somali, Galla, Boreua, or some other similar people effected a very strong footing in Kikuyu some fifty to seventy years ago. According to tradition they belonged to the Barabio Lokulala, Sigirai, and Endaremurai clans,‡ and they had settlements at Nyuri, Naivasha, Kijabe, Patoa Milia, and generally all over the Kikuyu country.

In those days the Alkipiak Masai occupied the Laikipia Plateau, the Purko Masai were at Naivasha, the Kapetiei in the Kidong Valley, and the Tarosero at Iriaini. The Dorobo, who were still the dominant tribe, occupied with the Kikuyu the present Kikuyu country.

With all these tribes the Somali or Galla lived in a state of chronic warfare.

The Larussa, a Kikuyu clan, and the Aiwa, a Dorobo clan, unable to hold out any longer, migrated. The former have, it is said, preserved to this day their tribal identity and customs, and are still to be found somewhere in the vicinity of Kilimanjaro§; the latter near Mombasa.‖

The remaining tribes appealed for assistance against their oppressors to a great medicine man called Supi (or, to give him his correct name, Supoet), the grandfather of Lenana, the present Masai chief.

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* The name Iriaini is said to be derived from 'N-Darusero ainai, my Tarusero women. Tarusero is the name of the most important clan in this particular section of the Masai.

† Mr. Hollis informs me that the Segeju, who have intermarried with the Digo, a sub-tribe of the Wa-Nyika, have a tradition to the effect that they once lived on the Tana River.

‡ Barabio is the Kikuyu, Sigirishih the Masai for Somali and Galla.

§ Possibly the Arusha, who live on Mount Meru in German East Africa.

‖ By Mombasa the up-country native often means the coast generally. According to Mr. Hollis the Wa-Duruma call themselves, and are known to the Galla as, Watwa; sing., Mwaa.

12:Dundas G-9 (ca. 1900) 1908 FLA Dorobo FL6
K-Kuku FL10
Masai FL12

Sogi is said to have instructed the Dorobo to bring him a pair of sandals made of leather having hair on both sides, the Masai to bring him a bull, the dung of which was pure white, and the Elkoye an animal called Hyko (a burrowing rat or mole).

The Dorobo cut off the ears of a donkey, and produced them as the required sandals before Sogi; the Masai brought a bull fat on milk only; and the Elkoye the animal called Hoko.

Sogi then told each tribe to take its respective charm and to attack the enemy separately and at different points.

The Masai, marching into Elkoye from Naivasha, fell upon the strangers first, and taking all their stock drove them on to the Elkoye, who in their turn drove them on to the Dorobo, by whom they were finally routed.

The Sonsoli or Gallo were then disposed of, and only by the same Sogi, which was given to the generation that fought with and expelled them, and by a few women of their tribe, taken prisoners by the Dorobo, are we reminded of their settlements in Elkoye. Amongst these prisoners may be mentioned an old woman called Barshin, who is still alive and resides in one of Sogo's villages. She was formerly Chief Karsol's nurse.

Needless to say the Masai kept all the cattle which they captured, and this caused a rupture between them and the Dorobo and Elkoye, who joined forces and waged war on them. After a truce had been made the Dorobo and Elkoye fought amongst themselves.

If the Elkoye were to live and increase they had to cultivate the ground, and to do so they were obliged to destroy the forests. The very existence, however, of the Dorobo depended on the preservation of the forests, and hence arose a struggle for survival, which allowed of no compromise and could have but one end.*

In an incredibly short time the great primeval forests, the home of the Dorobo, were destroyed, and with them this interesting people ceased to exist as a tribe. Deprived of the means of living, many died, some took to cultivation, whilst the majority migrated to other regions, where they formed small colonies, such as are to be found at Buringo, Naivasha, Barina, Kijabe, on Lolldaiga and Mau, at Taveta, in German East Africa, and even, it is said, in places as remote as Kisumayu—(the clue that went to this last place was the Agumbe). This scattering of the tribe accounts for the peculiar fact that Dorobo living in widely different localities speak the same language.† The Buringo, Naivasha, Kijabe, and Barina Dorobo, and those of similar colonies will, if questioned as to where they came from, usually mention Kawamoa and Kaiwa‡ as the birthplace of their fathers.

As regards the origin of this interesting tribe, we know little or nothing. There appear to have been two branches, the Agumbe and the Okiek: the former hunted the game on the plains, the latter in the forests. They lived in pits dug in the ground and covered over with leaves of the wild banana: these pits may to this day be seen anywhere in the Elkoye country, though of course they become more numerous the nearer one approaches the forest. They are also said to have buried their

* The first Elkoye to come into the country appear to have been almost without exception pastoral, and they accordingly did not interfere at all with the Dorobo. The later arrivals, who seem to have possessed less stock, purchased from individual Dorobo the right to certain pieces of land in forest. For some reason or other just about the time the Sonsoli or Gallo were driven out, a sudden very pressing demand for grain appears to have arisen amongst the Elkoye; this may have been due to one of two causes—the Elkoye may have lost through sickness a large amount of stock, or there may have been just at this time a sudden influx of agricultural natives.

† Masai. (In relation not in touch with Masai-speaking tribes, the younger generation is rapidly forgetting this language.)

‡ The country lying between the Rivers Suyu and Sabiyyo in Elkoye.

dead, and to have sacrificed to them; the few still surviving are believed to sacrifice every year (or more probably every Monday) to their ancestors. They speak a Kikuyu language; but languages go for nothing in this country, where a whole tribe will, with the greatest facility in the course of a single generation change its language. The Dundas themselves say that they, the Kamé and the Kikuyu, are the descendants of a common ancestor who called the Kikuyu, and their dark ancestress came from Lumbwa Mount Kenya. They also maintain that the clans of all those tribes are identical; that, for instance, the Kinyaboro clan in the Mukuyu of the Kamé; the Anjiru, the Tumuru; the Anduti, the Mukiyuru; the Akimwithi, the Aiuri; and so forth.

Their Kamé name of 3 Tumuti might perhaps imply that they are descended from a tribe of Atumbi; but though there are undoubtedly pigmy tribes of Dundas, such as the Wandi of the Lumbwa forest of Mount Kenya, the Dundas in existence on the present day are of much the same stature as other tribes in East Africa. The dwarfish figures of the Kisii Dundas may possibly be explained by the life they lead.

Compared with other natives the Dundas are not dishonest in intelligence; in fact, in many respects rather the contrary is the case. Dundas visitors and residents are generally amongst the Kikuyu and Kamé, who consult them in cases of sickness and confidence.

E. B. DUNDAS.

REVIEWS.

* It is difficult to account for the position that the Dundas hold. There are, it appears to me, reasons for believing that a large number of tribes are living in East Africa scattered from the north end Mount Kenya, and spread through the Kikuyu country. Many of these, and the Dundas are two such, like Kamé, Lumbwa, and Kisii, may have united more or less with the Kamé, Lumbwa, and Kisii, may have united more or less with the Kamé, Lumbwa, and Kisii, may have united more or less with the